



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington DC 20420

September 16, 2019

In Reply Refer To: 001B
FOIA Request: 19-08911-F

Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005
Foia@americanoversight.org

This is the Initial Agency Decision (IAD) from the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs (OSVA) to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request received and dated June 24, 2019, and assigned FOIA tracking number **19-08911-F**. You requested:

"All Records reflecting communication (including emails, email attachments, text messages, messages on message platforms (such as slack, Gchat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, or WhatsApp), Telephone call logs, calendar invitations, calendars entries, meeting notices meeting agendas, informational material, draft legislation, talking points, any handwritten or electronic notes taken during any oral communications, handwritten or electronic summaries of any oral communication or the materials between (a) political appointees in the office of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Office of General Counsel, or VA leadership office and any of the White House Council staff listed below regarding congressional oversight of the executive branch- including both specific congressional oversight of specific matters and general policies, concerns, and congressional oversight of the executive branch.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Don Mc Gahn | 25) Steven Groves |
| 2) Pat Cipollone | 26) Eric Hamilton |
| 3) Stacy Amin | 27) Tara Helfman |
| 4) Omeed Assefi | 28) David Jones |
| 5) Sue Bai | 29) Dino LaVerghetta |
| 6) Trent Benishek | 30) Will Levi |
| 7) Ryan Brady | 31) Robert Luther |
| 8) Joseph CLark | 32) Jon "Tyler" McGaughey |
| 9) Devin De Backer | 33) Steven Menashi |
| 10) Uttam Dhillon | 34) Chad Mizelle |
| 11) Jennifer Dickey | 35) John Moran |
| 12) George "Jed" Doty | 36) David Morrell |
| 13) Anne Donaldson | 37) Claire Murray |
| 14) John Eisenberg | 38) Brian Nieves |
| 15) Michael Ellis | 39) Kevin O'Scannlain |
| 16) Deirdre Eliot | 40) Stefan Passantino |
| 17) Dan Epstein | 41) Patrick Philben |
| 18) Emmett Flood | 42) Bethany Pickett |
| 19) Joe Gammello | 43) Sam Ramer |
| 20) Kevin Garvey | 44) Sean Sandoloski |
| 21) Scott Gast | 45) Schuyler Schouten |
| 22) Scott Glabe | 46) Kathryn Comerford Todd |
| 23) Chris Greico | 47) Michael Velchik |
| 24) Mark Grider | 48) John Walk |

. . . . Please provide all responsive records from September 1, 2018, through the date of the search."

IAD and Reasonable Searches Dated 8/13/19 & 9/16/19

On August 13, 2019, our search cut-off date, the OSVA FOIA Officer requested that the VA OIT office provide all responsive records, if any, with date timeframe of September 1, 2018, to August 13, 2019 within the email boxes of: 1) Robert Wilkie, 2) Peter O'Rourke, 3) Jim Byrne, 4) Pam Powers, 5) Darin Selnick, and 6) Jake Leinenkugel. On August 20, 2019, the VA OIT office completed its search.

On September 16, 2019, the OSVA FOIA Officer conducted a follow-up search with date timeframe of September 1, 2018, to August 13, 2019 within the email boxes of: 1) Robert Wilkie, 2) Peter O'Rourke, 3) Jim Byrne, 4) Pam Powers, 5) Darin Selnick, and 6) Jake Leinenkugel. The OSVA FOIA Officer looked for all emails to or from the following individuals: McGahn, Cipollone, Amin, Assefi, Bai, Benishek, Brady, Clark, DeBacker, Dhilon, Dickey, Doty, Donaldson, Eisenberg, Ellis, Eliot, Epstein, Flood, Gammello, Garvey, Gast, Glabe, Greico, Grider, Groves, Hamilton, Helfman, Jones, LaVerghetta, Levi, Luther, McGaughey, Menashi, Mizelle, Moran, Morrell, Murray, Nieves, O'Scannlain, Passantino, Philben, Pickett, Ramer, Sandoloski, Schouten, Todd, Velchik, or Walk. The OSVA FOIA Officer used the search terms: Congressional and oversight within five (5) words.

Despite these two (2) separate, reasonable searches, the OSVA FOIA Officer found no responsive records. Thus, OSVA issues you a "no records" response.

FOIA Mediation

As part of the 2007 FOIA amendments, the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. Under the provisions of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, the following contact information is provided to assist FOIA requesters in resolving disputes:

VA Central Office FOIA Public Liaison:

Name: John Buck

Email Address: vacofoiaservice@va.gov

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

Email Address: ogis@nara.gov

Fax: 202-741-5769

Mailing address:

National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, MD 20740-6001

FOIA Appeal

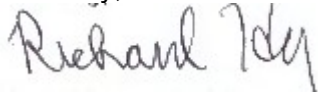
This concludes OSVA's Initial Agency Decision to request **19-08911-F**. Please be advised that should you desire to do so, you may appeal the determination made in this response to:

Office of General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

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If you should choose to file an appeal, please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly indicate the basis for your disagreement with the determination set forth in this response. Please be advised that in accordance with VA's implementing FOIA regulations at 38 C.F.R. § 1.559, your appeal must be postmarked no later than ninety (90) days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Richard Ha". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Ha, JD, CIPP/G
OSVA FOIA Officer